

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:7106
ANSWERED ON:14.05.2002
DEMOLITION WORK OF OLD CURRENCY BUILDING
VINAY KUMAR SORAKE

Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a): whether the Central Public Works Department (Central Div.III) Kolkata awarded demolition work of Old Currency Building which is heritage property built in 1833, in violation of rules in 1996;
- (b): if so, whether this unauthorized demolition resulted in avoidable payment of rent amounting to Rs. 5.00 crore by the occupying Government offices apart from damage to the heritage structure;
- (c): if so, the details thereof;
- (d): whether the restoration cost of partly demolished structure has been estimated at Rs.13.25 crore;
- (e): if so, whether the Auditor and Comptroller General of India has referred this matter to the Government; and
- (f): if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT & POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA)

(a): Due to normal wear and tear; the Currency building at Kolkata, constructed in 1833, had become structurally unsafe and dangerous and therefore unfit for further occupation. Keeping in view its structural instability, Central Public Works Department declared the building unsafe for occupation and in July 1994 the Ministry of Urban Development decided to demolish the building and accorded sanction for write off.

After observing codal formalities the demolition of the building was started. However, the Calcutta Municipal Corporation declared the building as a heritage building vide Gazette Notification dated 26.5.96. In view of the fact that decision to demolish the building was taken in 1994 itself, i.e. before the Gazette Notification of 1996, no violation of rule has taken place.

(b)&(c): Since the building was unsafe and not fit for further occupation, it had to be vacated and the departments occupying it had to move to other accommodation. As the shifting had become unavoidable it cannot be linked, directly/indirectly to the demolition of the building.

(d): Rs.12,68,74,200/- and not Rs.13.25 crores has been estimated for the restoration and renovation work.

(e): Yes, Sir.

(f): Factual statement on draft para on `Unauthorized demolition of Heritage Building` relating to the CPWD has been furnished to Principal Director of Audit.